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ABSTRACT

This brief presents summary information about the U.S. Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, which mandated the Commercial Driver's License Test (CDL); the compliance status of states and drivers to date; and a recently authorized government grants program that will help fund CDL adult education programs. It also provides contacts/references for a sampling of programs and resources that have been developed at the local, state, and national levels to help commercial drivers pass the CDL exam. Nine contacts are included: Indiana Governor's Voluntary Action Program; Real Opportunity for Advancement and Development, Pennsylvania Department of Education; Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Pennsylvania State University; Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Resource Center, Virginia Commonwealth University; American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; Amalgamated Transit Union; Literacy Skills Partners; and Columbia-Willamette Skill Builders Consortium. Each entry may contain the following: contact name, organization, address, telephone number, and program description. In addition, CDL state information phone numbers are listed. The seven references listed include descriptions and availability information. (NLA)

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Brief

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The U.S. Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986

This Brief presents summary information about the federal legislation that mandated the Commercial Driver's License Test (CDL), the compliance status of states and drivers to date, and a recently-authorized government grants program that will help fund CDL adult education programs. It also provides--under "Contacts" and "References"--a sampling of programs and resources that have been developed at the local, state, and national levels to help commercial drivers pass the CDL exam.

The Legislation

By April 1992, commercial drivers will have to pass a federally-mandated comprehensive written and oral knowledge exam and related driving test or risk losing their licenses and their jobs. This is required by the U.S. Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-570), which was designed to increase the safety of our nation's highways. [Drivers must be able to read at least at a 6th grade equivalency level to pass the written portion of the exam.] Each state is responsible for administering its own CDL testing and licensing program, though in conformance with federal minimum standards. The law establishes a penalty--the withholding of a percentage of federal highway funds--for states that do not implement the standards. The Act also seeks to remedy highway safety problems caused by drivers who spread their convictions among licenses issued by many different states in order to avoid possible license suspension or revocation. It is now illegal for drivers to hold more than one license, which must be issued by their home state.

To help enforce its requirements, a Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) has been established by the Act. CDLIS is a national repository to which the states are linked by computer and to which they must give information about their activities to meet federal compliance standards. CDLIS also serves as a clearinghouse of information to the states on matters pertaining to the licensing and disqualification of commercial drivers. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and the Federal Highway Administration are tracking the status of state implementation.

Because the states are required only to meet minimum federal standards, there is considerable variation in the way they are actually implementing the examination requirements of the Act. For this reason, the specific requirements of any given state should be verified with that state's Department of Motor Vehicles (see state information phone numbers on page 6).

In general, the law includes drivers of vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property, and that:

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- o Have a gross vehicle or combination weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more;
- o Are designed to carry 16 or more persons, including the driver; or
- o Are required to be placarded because of the hazardous cargo they transport.

In addition to the driving skills test, all commercial drivers must pass a "General Knowledge" test. Drivers who transport passengers or hazardous materials, operate vehicles with air brakes, drive combination vehicles, and/or pull double and triple trailers must also pass the relevant "Endorsements" sections of the CDL exam to qualify for a license.

Status of Compliance

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as of early September, 39 states have fully operational programs underway--that is, they are now testing for and issuing CDL's, and are linked to the national CDLIS and meeting its reporting requirements. (States that have implemented CDL testing and are issuing "provisional" CDL's are not considered to be in full compliance until they are tied into the CDLIS system.) So far, only about 1.5-2.0 million of the estimated four million commercial drivers nationwide have received their CDL's. With the April 1992 deadline fast approaching--and no extension of the compliance date planned--there is widespread concern about a likely logjam of CDL applicants in the coming months.

Some drivers may not be coming forward because they think that the CDL deadline will be extended. For others, the fear of taking the test and/or poor reading or English language skills may be holding them back. The "official" CDL manual put out by the Essex Corporation--the same organization that designed the CDL test--is a 120-page document written at a 6th-9th grade level with technical terminology and diagrams. Even drivers with average reading skills and a "hands-on" knowledge of their trade may have lost their test-taking skills over the years, or may have difficulty with the technical nature of the materials and exam questions. For those with low literacy or ESL skills, the challenge is even more formidable.

Some states--like Indiana and Pennsylvania, with estimated commercial driver populations of 200,000 and 1.2 million respectively--have taken aggressive steps to help their resident drivers prepare for the CDL exam. At the national level some industry associations and unions are offering study materials based on the CDL manual, while a number of literacy groups and publishers have developed special curricula to address the needs of drivers with low-level literacy skills.

Federal Grant Funds for CDL Preparation

In March, in the Higher Education Technical Amendments of 1991, provision was made for federal funding for programs to increase the literacy skills of commercial drivers facing the CDL test. Funding of $3 million a year for the period 1991 to 1993 was subsequently authorized under Public Law 102-26, with the U.S. Department of Education to administer the program. For the first year of the program, $1.95 million has actually been appropriated. Some 10 grants of from $150-200,000 each will be awarded on a competitive basis, with the

federal share of program costs not to exceed 50 percent. Regulations and application guidelines appeared in the August 12 *Federal Register*, with October 11 given as the deadline for submitting proposals. The Department will announce the grantees in early 1992.

Four basic categories of institutions are eligible for the grant competition:

- o Private employers of commercial drivers in partnership with two- and four-year colleges and universities, or state or local government education agencies;
- o Two- and four-year colleges and universities, or state or local government education agencies;
- o Approved apprenticeship training programs; and
- o Labor organizations whose membership includes commercial drivers.

(For more information about the grant program contact Marian Banfield, Special Programs Branch, Division of National Programs, OVAE, U.S. Department of Education, Room 4512-MES, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-7327, 202-732-1838; or Carroll Towey, Program Services Branch, Division of Adult Education & Literacy, OVAE, U.S. Department of Education, Room 4425-MES, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-7320, 202-732-2391.)

Contacts:

1. Patricia Moss, Project Director, Governor's Voluntary Action Program, Room E220, 302 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 42604, (317) 233-3000. Indiana estimates that as many as 50,000 of its 200,000 commercial drivers in the state may not have sufficient reading skills to study the CDL manual or take the written test. The state's Department of Motor Vehicles thus developed *Road Ready*, a statewide program of training assistance to help prepare individuals for the CDL exam. Professional and labor organizations, libraries, the media, and Indiana's licensing branches are all cooperating to publicize the availability of instruction at some 60 sites around the state. Private Industry Councils serve as the delivery system for employment and training programs, and in each of their districts they have established relationships with community adult education providers. Working with the PIC's, *Road Ready* staff have identified and trained the providers. As of May 15, the *Road Ready* program had served between 2-3,000 drivers in the state. The curriculum includes the CDL manual, suggestions for working with adult learners, and a list of literacy providers throughout Indiana for referral of participants. The CDL manual itself is cross-referenced to a variety of resource materials that reinforce the subject matter in the various topical areas covered. Nine public broadcasting stations in the state have aired a series of half-hour CDL training films--developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation--in which a hotline number was given for people needing additional help. The television series has been converted to video. For groups within Indiana, the videos are available on loan from public libraries and may be duplicated. They can also be obtained from The Highway Research Institute at Purdue University at cost. (See "References" for information on how to order the video series outside of Indiana.) While the *Road Ready* program itself is not available outside of Indiana, information about its use and development is.

2. Ella Morin, R.O.A.D. Project Coordinator, Adult Basic and Literacy Education Division, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, (717) 787-5532. The "Real Opportunity for Advancement and Development" program being carried out by the Pennsylvania Department of Education has been using two approaches to help prepare Commonwealth drivers for the CDL test. The Department contracted with an outside consultant to conduct 50 "Train the Trainer" workshops throughout the state. The trainers came from unions, municipalities, and state and county agencies as well as commercial companies having five or more drivers (e.g. distributors, manufacturers, bus lines, motor freight firms, and sanitation and construction companies). The three-day workshops provided instructional techniques, test-taking tips, and information on CDL materials the trainers could use to prepare their employees for the exam. By the completion of the workshops this past April, over 1,300 trainers had participated. The Department is also operating a "R.O.A.D. to Success" project for individual drivers who have trouble reading the CDL manual and exam. The project is expected to conclude at the end of August 1991. Dividing the state into six regions, one adult education agency in each locale was selected to give free basic skills instruction using print and computer-based materials developed by the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy (see #3 below). Classes are held at various locations and times to accommodate the truckers' driving schedules. During the first five months of the project, 1,200 drivers were served.

3. Eunice Askov, Director, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Penn State University, 204 Calder Way, Suite 209, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-3777. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, AFL-CIO Local #13 of the American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees, and the State Department of Transportation, the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy developed a *R.O.A.D. to Success* instructional program, which includes interactive computer software and print materials. Based on the CDL manual, the materials are all written at a 4th-7th grade level and designed to help drivers master vocabulary and reading skills needed to understand the manual and the test. The *R.O.A.D.* course was piloted with a group of 60 drivers from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, all predicted to fail the exam. About 60 percent passed the test at the end of the course, and another 18--with some additional training--have since passed it. Funding for the project was provided through the national workplace literacy initiative of the U.S. Department of Education. This model curriculum is available nationwide at cost (see "References").

4. Robert Stull, Chief of Training, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Transportation & Safety Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120, (717) 787-4125. Shortly after the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act was passed, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (DOT) took steps to begin preparing its own 5,000 equipment operators and mechanics across the state for the CDL exam. It developed training materials, including a video version of the CDL manual (see "References"). [The video has since been used by Indiana and some other states.] In each district office in Pennsylvania, DOT identified staff to provide the CDL instruction and brought them together for training. DOT employees were then given released time for their participation in instruction and testing. As of July 1, about 98 percent of the operators and mechanics had passed the CDL test. DOT plans to develop further training to meet the special needs of those who have not yet qualified.

5. Evelyn Nunes, Coordinator, Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Resource Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, 4080 Oliver Hall, 1015 West Main Street, Richmond, VA 23284-2020, (804) 367-6521. The Adult Education and Literacy Resource Center is disseminating resource materials and information about education programs available in the

state to help resident commercial drivers prepare for the CDL test. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Virginia Literacy Initiative are cooperating in a program in which CDL classes are given in 19 specially-funded sites around the state. A "Commercial Driver's Reading Skills Preparation Program" is also being offered by local adult education programs statewide. In addition, CDL study materials (produced by the DMV) are being made available through the Adult Education and Literacy Resource Center free of charge to certain organizations in Virginia which offer CDL preparation courses--including groups affiliated with public employees, churches, nonprofit literacy organizations, and CBO's. The materials include a CDL manual written at a low reading skills level, a teacher's kit, and audio- and video-cassettes covering both the General Knowledge and Endorsement sections of the exam. Private companies in the state can obtain the materials at cost.

6. Clark Martin, Director, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22203, (703) 522-4200. The AAMVA tracks the status of CDL implementation by the states, works with the states to help them administer the CDL tests, and has helped the federal government develop oral tests and exams to be given in Spanish. AAMVA's introductory and promotional materials (see "References") are part of a larger national CDL campaign--called "The Pride's Back Inside"--designed to reinforce a sense of professionalism and self-esteem among commercial drivers and gain their cooperation in taking the test.

7. Robert Molofsky, Legislative Director, Amalgamated Transit Union, 5025 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016, (202) 537-1645. The International Office of the Amalgamated Transit Union has distributed a brochure to its members giving information about the CDL test and announcing its own *Commercial Driver's License Study Program*, intended for those who need minimal skills upgrading. An accompanying *Facilitator's Guide* for union officials is also available. As of July 1990, some 12,000 sets had already been sold. These materials will be available soon in Spanish. (See "References".)

8. Bo Montgomery, Executive Director, Literacy Skills Partners, 110 West 13th Street, Little Rock, AR 72202-4906, (501) 375-7323. In 1990 the Little Rock Municipal Water Works and the Literacy Council of Pulaski County in Arkansas (now Literacy Skills Partners), under the guidance of Performance Plus Learning Consultants, developed a program to prepare city truck drivers to pass the CDL test. The result was a 32-hour course for Water Works' employees, taught by Literacy Skills Partners over an eight-week period. Based on the program's success, it was extended to drivers in the city's Fleet Services, Parks and Recreation, and Sanitation and Street Operations divisions. The curriculum is now available nationally as *The Passing Lane: Strategic Study Skills for the Commercial Driver's License Tests* (see "References"). Literacy Skills Partners will provide seminars for groups which purchase the curriculum and need help implementing it.

9. Steve Reder, Project Coordinator, Columbia-Willamette Skill Builders Consortium, c/o Literacy, Language and Communication Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR, 97204 (503) 275-9591. The Columbia-Willamette Skill Builders Consortium is a network of Portland-area community colleges, businesses, labor unions, and educational consultants that have linked up to address the workplace literacy needs of a number of area industries, including trucking. The Teamsters Union Local 162 offers one-day CDL seminars for drivers which conclude with the CDL test. Drivers who do not pass the exam seek tutoring through Skill Builders. Consortium instructors

provide specialized functional-context training for the drivers at Mt. Hood Community College and at union halls. The tutoring--which is both one-on-one and small-group--is offered free of charge during day and evening hours. It aims to help drivers develop focused reading, information retention, and study skills as well as enhanced self-esteem.10. Richard Landis, Associate Administrator, Motor Carriers, Federal Highway Administration, Room 3103, 400 Seventh Street SW, Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-2519. The Federal Highway Administration is also monitoring the implementation and progress of CDL testing and licensing programs. While FHWA is concerned that some states are lagging and that only 25-30 percent of the nation's commercial drivers have passed the CDL test, the FHWA says the April 1992 deadline will not be extended. Associate Administrator Landis recently met with a group of people from across the country to discuss "how we can get this thing [CDL testing and licensing] done." FHWA has issued a list of state "CDL Information" telephone numbers, as follows:

CDL State Information Numbers:

Alabama	205-242-4235
Alaska	907-269-5583
Arizona	602-255-8645
Arkansas	501-565-8771
California	916-739-5832
Colorado	303-572-5601
Connecticut	800-842-8222
Delaware	302-739-5669
Dist. of Columbia	202-727-3894
Florida	800-741-2354
Georgia	404-624-7469
Hawaii	808-548-5756
Idaho	800-344-3941
Illinois	217-785-7447
Indiana	800-562-4591
Iowa	515-237-3075
Kansas	913-296-3671
Kentucky	502-564-7633
Louisiana	504-925-6277
Maine	207-289-2819
Maryland	800-344-7309
Massachusetts	617-727-3860/61
Michigan	517-322-1166
Minnesota	612-296-9503
Mississippi	601-987-1220
Missouri	800-827-5235
Montana	406-444-5480
Nebraska	402-471-3668
Nevada	702-688-2404
New Hampshire	603-271-2371
New Jersey	800-DMV-2222
	609-588-2424
New Mexico	505-827-0520
New York	800-CDL-INFO
	518-474-2659
North Carolina	919-733-5387
North Dakota	701-224-4353
Ohio	614-752-7287
Oklahoma	405-425-2056
Oregon	503-373-1514
Pennsylvania	800-932-4600
	717-787-3130
Rhode Island	401-277-6514
South Carolina	803-737-6380
South Dakota	605-773-5949
Tennessee	615-251-5310
Texas	512-465-2149
Utah	801-262-2709
Vermont	802-828-2017
Virginia	800-223-8782
Washington	206-586-8262
West Virginia	304-348-2723
Wisconsin	608-266-2237
Wyoming	307-777-6516

Note: The 800 numbers are for in-state use only.

Source: Federal Highway Administration

References:

1. *R.O.A.D. To Success,* developed by the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy of Penn State University, is a comprehensive basic skills program, including computer-assisted and print modules, to prepare commercial vehicle operators for the CDL test. The program includes a Computer Software package, a Software Reference Guide, Learning Activity Packets (print materials which parallel the computer modules), an Instructor's Manual, a Preview Set, a CDL Basic Skills Check, and an Evaluation Report. For further details about the program or for ordering information contact the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Penn State University, 204 Calder Way, Suite 209, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-3777. [Note: The "R.O.A.D." brochure includes an order form, hardware and software specifications, and a price list for the various curricular components.]

2. *The Commercial Driver's License Video Series* , developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, is a four and a half hour video version of the CDL manual. It covers both General Knowledge and Endorsements. Each video segment is referenced to a particular section of the CDL manual--the same words, references, and test questions found in the printed version are displayed on screen. Over 900 sets of the program have been sold by the DOT and permission has been given for public television airing and taping in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin. The CDL video series sells within Pennsylvania for $99 including sales tax. (To order outside of Pennsylvania, see item 7 below.) No phone orders are accepted. For a brochure and order form contact the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Distribution Services Unit, P.O. Box 2028, Harrisburg, PA 17150, (717) 787-6746.

3. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators has produced a number of programs for CDL purposes. Its *CDL Regulations and Interpretation Update Service* is a quarterly information publication. Its *"The Pride's Back Inside"* is a general information and promotional program available in three different formats, a video program, a slide program with an accompanying audiotape and a print script which can be adapted for individual presentations, and an audiocassette program. The *National CDL Program Slides* program (with print script) explains the CDL requirements and how they affect company operations and drivers. Also available from AAMVA is the *Official CDL Manual.* An order form and descriptive brochure can be obtained by calling (703) 522-4200 or writing the AAMVA at P.O. Box 0220, Washington, DC 20055.

4. The Amalgamated Transit Union's (ATU) *Commercial Driver's License Study Program* is designed for drivers who need minimal skills upgrading. It contains four study booklets, a one-hour videotape, and a 45-minute audiotape. The material can be used for home study or in a classroom setting. It is built around facts and information that drivers must know to pass the test, and can be adapted to meet local needs. The program is available to ATU members and their employers for $13.75 and to others, such as community groups, companies, and state agencies, for $16.50. The *Facilitator's Guide* sells for $7.50. A Spanish edition of the program will be available shortly. To order the brochure or materials contact the Amalgamated Transit Union, CDL Publications, 5025 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 537-1645.

5. *The Passing Lane: Strategic Study Skills for the Commercial Driver's License Tests,* developed by Literacy Skills Partners, is an 1100-page curriculum that prepares truckers for the CDL exam while developing the reading skills they need to use the CDL manual. While it is

designed to be used in conjunction with the manual, other job materials--such as company accident report forms and vehicle check lists--can be incorporated. The curriculum includes a basic course for students reading below the 6th grade level and an intermediate course for students at 6th-9th grade levels. Each course interweaves lesson plans for instructors with worksheets and other materials for students. (Instructors reproduce the student materials for each class member.) Program segments correspond to sections in the CDL manual and are presented in the same order. The package--three-hole-punched for insertion into a 3-inch binder (binder not provided)--is available for $200 plus $10 postage and handling from Literacy Skills Partners, 110 West 13th Street, Little Rock, AR 72202-4906, (501) 375-7323. Literacy Skills Partners will also conduct one-day workshops for groups of instructors needing help to implement the curriculum. For details on the workshops, contact Bo Montgomery at the above address.

6. In 1989, the Gregg Division of McGraw-Hill, Inc. published a series of basic skills books for use by truckers. The program is designed for self study at home or for use in ABE classroom settings. It consists of three 10-hour workbooks on *Reading* (#007023314-4), *Writing* (#007023430-2), and *Math* (#007023431-0), and an *Instructor's Manual and Answer Key* for the entire series (#007023315-2). The texts use actual language and situations from the trucking industry to teach important basic concepts and skills--for example, the content used and needed to understand information about cargo, meet federal regulations by writing a daily log, or compute everything from tonnage to mileage. Each workbook retails for $11.20; the teacher's manual is $5.50. For more information or to order, call 1-800-33-GREGG.

7. Delmar Publishers is marketing three CDL-related programs: (1) *The Complete Commercial Driver's License Training Program* has three components--a train-the-trainer resource binder with step-by-step outlines for each lesson and sample tests and study guides for each specialty area; two full-color videocassettes, one focusing on General Knowledge and one on Endorsements (developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation); and a copy of the Essex CDL study manual. The total package sells for $250. (2) *The Complete Commercial Driver's Study Program* uses a multi-media approach. It contains two study booklets (General Knowledge and Endorsements) with test-taking and study tips, pre- and post-tests, glossaries, and study and review questions, and a videocassette and audiotape to reinforce learning. Total package: $65.95. (3) *Mastering Reading for Commercial Truck Drivers* is part of Delmar's "Occupational Learning System" series. It includes four student workbooks and a "Teacher Resource" guide. Using a functional-context approach, the program provides present and future truckers with reading passages containing terms and phrases they are likely to encounter on the job. The reading levels of the books progress from grade 3 to grade 7. Total cost: $39.95. In each of the three programs described above, components of the package can be purchased separately. To get a full descriptive brochure and order form, contact Delmar Publishers, Two Computer Drive West, P.O. Box 15015, Albany, NY 12212, (800) 347-7707 or (518) 459-1150.

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